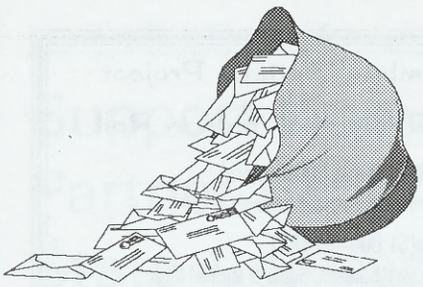

Lambda Letters Project

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32644

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The Cruel Legislator

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

In a recent letter to the public Assemblymember **Bill Leonard** (R–Rancho Cucamonga) expressed his opposition to a Sacramento Capitol rotunda exhibit on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender history in California. Although the exhibit showed the pictures of the four current lesbian legislators, he complained that it didn't limit itself to their legislative accomplishments. Instead, he said, it reviewed the establishment and abolishment of sodomy laws. This made him feel the exhibit should garner an "R rating," not suitable for children and families. Evidently he believes that gay sex is immoral and should not be discussed in public.

Leonard also complained that the same legislators who opposed honoring the Boy Scouts of America supported this exhibit. He said these legislators gave no heed to people's objections to using state money to fund displays about sodomy.

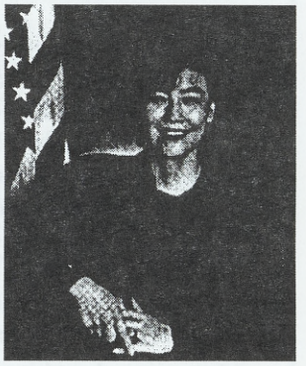
Let's look at this Assemblymember's complaints. Is gay sex really too immoral to be discussed in public? If so, gay marriage, which usually leads to gay sex, would be just as taboo. But consider these facts. As far back as 1996 the Central Conference of American Rabbis adopted a resolution on the subject. They

Continued on page 13

Commendation to Assemblymember Chu

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community owes a great debt of gratitude to Assemblymember Judy Chu (D–Monterey Park). Although just in her first term as a state legislator, she has taken on an issue that some would view as very controversial. It relates to some of the most at-risk members of the LGBT community. Assemblymember Chu introduced AB 2651, a bill to protect LGBT foster children and the LGBT adults who might act as their foster parents and caregivers.



In its original form, AB 2651 would have provided protection from discrimination and mistreatment for only gay and lesbian foster children and foster parents. However, the bill has been amended several times and now it protects lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender foster youth and foster parents and caregivers.

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters & Messages Collected

June, 2002	13,922 letters & e-mails
In all of 2002	108,955 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

June, 2002	$4,196
In all of 2002	$24,703

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

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To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy, and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered and intersex persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in American society.

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If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.
The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Issue

Support Domestic Partner Benefits from State Contractors

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

California is one of the largest customers in the world. Every year it buys many millions of dollars' worth of goods and services from thousands of companies. As such, it is in a strong position to affect the business practices of those companies.

Assemblymember Christine Kehoe (D–San Diego) has introduced a blockbuster LGBT rights bill that takes advantage of the above situation. Her bill, AB 1080, says that any company which contracts with the state of California must offer the same health benefits to the domestic partners of its employees as are now offered to employees' spouses. The bill is modeled after the law passed in San Francisco several years ago.

This state has a long history of making specific demands of its contractors. The state requires these companies to do things they would not have to do if they were not contracting with the state. For example, contractors are required to pay prevailing wages to their employees. Generally that means union wages. Contractors must also employ disabled veterans or show that they have made a good-faith effort to find and hire them.

Is the time ripe for such a bill as AB 1080? Are employers ready for it? The concept of domestic partner health benefits is not new to private industry. Currently 175 of the 500 largest American corporations offer domestic partner health benefits to their employees. Over 4,000 private-sector employers are known to provide these benefits. A law like AB 1080 could do a lot to spread this practice. It could do much to provide much-needed healthcare insurance to employees who work in the private sector, and to their domestic partners.

AB 1080 is a good bill. Please write Governor Davis and urge him to support this bill as it goes through the legislative process and to sign it when it reaches his desk.

###

HIV/AIDS Issue

Support Expanded Medi-Cal Coverage for HIV Positives

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Today we ask that you write to Governor Davis in support of AB 2197. This bill would provide Medi-Cal paid healthcare to the HIV-positive, but non-disabled, population.

Medi-Cal provides government-paid medical care for disabled people on a limited income. Under current law, people who have full-blown AIDS are automatically considered disabled. If they are poor as well, they meet the standards of eligibility for Medi-Cal. However, people who are HIV-positive but AIDS-negative do not necessarily meet the disability qualification.

The problem is that treatment for HIV is very expensive. Those without adequate insurance rarely can afford the treatment for the infection. Proper treatment might help them avoid full-blown AIDS. However, without treatment most HIV-positive people progress to full-blown AIDS. Obviously early intervention and treatment is preferable to waiting for people to meet the Medi-Cal disability standards, at which point they are more ill.

AB 2197 would solve the problem by allowing HIV-positive people who meet the poverty criteria to qualify for Medi-Cal even if they are not disabled.

This bill has been approved by the State Assembly and by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. We need your support to assure successful passage of the bill and its signature by the governor. Please write and urge him to publicly support the bill through the rest of the legislative process and to sign it if it reaches his desk. ###

Deborah A. Brooks
Certified Public Accountant

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Women's Issue

One Giant Leap for Domestic Violence Victims

By Adrienne Lauby

When the U.S. Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act, it allowed victims of gender-motivated violence to sue their attackers directly and, if they won, to get money for their injuries. It permitted women to ask for and get money as a punishment for those who hurt them. Finally, it stated that victims and survivors could go to court anytime for up to 10 years.

In 2000 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down this part of the law. The Court agreed that "a voluminous congressional record" showed that some state justice systems had an insidious bias against victims of sexual and domestic violence but, referring to the Constitution, the justices ruled that the states were the only ones with the power to allow victims to sue their attackers.

Talk about one step forward, two steps back! Yes, state courts are prejudiced against women and this type of victim so women need a civil rights remedy. Yes, women need another court system to get justice. And who has the ability to give them that civil rights option, that backup court system? It is only each state's legislature, the same one that frequently shares the insidious bias of the state's justice system.

Will California allow this option denied by the Supreme Court? Perhaps. AB 1928, sponsored by Hannah-Beth Jackson (D–Santa Barbara), will enable women and men who have been victims of gender-motivated violence to hold their attackers financially responsible for their crimes.

California NOW has assembled a great coalition of organizations that want California's women to know they live in a state that gives them all the roads to justice even if it cannot always protect them from violence. In supporting this bill, Lambda Letters Project is proud to join the California Coalition for Youth, Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Consumer Attorneys of California, National Council of La Raza, and the Older Women's League of California. Please show your support too by signing the sample letter enclosed with this newsletter.

###

People of Color Issue

Maintain Regulations on Health Plans

By Marty Martinez

Communities of color suffer disproportionately from inequities in the healthcare system. Health plans, which manage individuals' healthcare, do not always respond adequately to the needs of communities of color. The state of California has enacted laws and regulations to help provide protections to all consumers of healthcare. These protections are particularly meaningful to communities of color because of their vulnerability to inequities in the system. However, there are attempts at the national level to weaken the stronger protections we have in California. That is why we must oppose SB 858.

SB 858 would create a *national* Association Health Plan (AHP). Under current law, AHPs are health insurance plans available to small businesses and associations as a means of providing cheap, no-frills health insurance coverage.

By creating a national AHP, SB 858 would exempt these health plans from state regulations that currently offer some protection to consumers, such as mandating coverage of services like emergency room visits, mental healthcare, dental care, substance abuse therapy, hospice services, chiropractic care, cancer screenings, and maternity care.

We hope you will oppose SN 858 and act with us to help secure Senator Feinstein's opposition to this bill.

###

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August Legislative Update

August 5 marks the beginning of the final chapter of the state legislative process for this year. The legislative session ends on August 31 and any bill must be approved and sent to Governor Davis by that date or it dies. Much midnight oil will burn in the Legislature during the month of August. The governor has until September 30 to sign or veto bills, or allow bills to become law without his signature.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 925 (Dion Aroner, D–Berkeley)
Purpose: To make several changes to the laws surrounding the California Working Disabled Program (CWD). Among other changes, it would allow working disabled people to earn up to 450 percent of the federal poverty level to buy into Medi-Cal health insurance.
Status: Passed the Assembly and all necessary Senate committees. This bill has been dropped by the author and its contents have been put into a budget bill.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1423 (Helen Thomson, D–Vacaville)
Purpose: To include licensed marriage and family therapist services, and clinical social worker services, within the scope of Medi-Cal–covered benefits to the extent that federal matching funds are available, including home- and community-based services approved by the Department of Health and Human Services, for beneficiaries with a diagnosis of AIDS (or ARC) who require intermediate care or a higher-level of care.
Status: The bill is being dropped by the author. The estimates of its cost are high enough that she believes it would be defeated in the Senate or vetoed by the governor.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2064 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Health Services to authorize the establishment of training programs for counselors for publicly funded HIV testing programs by specified community-based, nonprofit organizations. The bill would require the department to establish uniform curriculum content and design for these training programs. Would require the participating community-based organizations to follow departmental curriculum guidelines for these training programs. Costs associated with training programs administered pursuant to the bill would be absorbed by participating community-based organizations.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on August 5.
LLP Position: Support, with some concern about the cost to community-based groups.

AB 2197 (Paul Koretz, D–West Hollywood)
Purpose: To modify the Medi-Cal health insurance rules to provide coverage for people who are HIV-positive and who qualify for Medi-Cal, except that they are not disabled.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on August 5.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2905 (Roderick Wright, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require HIV testing be offered to all inmates in California State Prisons, subject to an inmate's right of refusal.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and sent to the Senate Public Safety committee for a vote on August 6.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 187 (John Vasconcellos, D–Santa Clara)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Health to establish and maintain a voluntary program for the issuance of registry identification cards to qualified medical marijuana patients, and to establish procedures under which a patient with the card could use marijuana for medical purposes. *Note:* A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision stated that, in spite of Proposition 215, a person may be prosecuted under federal law for possession of marijuana. The court said medical necessity does not justify possession. So signing up for a marijuana registry card may be signing a confession to violation of federal law.
Status: Left on the Senate floor while Senator Vasconcellos seeks to persuade the governor to sign it.
LLP Position: Oppose.

SB 599 (Wesley Chesbro, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To require health plans to cover medically necessary substance-related disorders in the same way that plans cover any other medical condition. The only limit that may be placed on the coverage is a 60-day annual limit on non-hospital residential care. The bill would also require health plans to offer coverage for the treatment of alcoholism.

Continued on page 7

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 5

Status: Passed the Senate and all necessary Assembly Committees. Is in the Assembly Inactive file pending the author's decision on what to do with it. It's strongly opposed by the insurance industry. The author plans to move the bill in 2002, although he would not have to move it until the end of the year. A deal may be cut to mandate only the substance-abuse related benefits covered by CalPERS, the healthcare program for state workers. That program has some limits.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1315 (Byron Sher, D–Redwood City)
Purpose: To reduce prescription drug costs by establishing a multi-agency prescription drug buying pool in state and county governments and for school districts. By buying in bulk, the central purchaser may be able to lower the per-unit cost of the drugs. The central purchaser could buy drugs for other state or county government agencies.
Status: Approved by the Senate and sent to the Assembly Health Committee. Hearing postponed by the committee. No new hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1734 (John Vasconcellos, D–San Jose)
Purpose: Current law protects public entities, their agents, or employees from prosecution for distribution of hypodermic needles or syringes to participants in clean needle and syringe exchange projects authorized by the public entity pursuant to a declaration of a local emergency due to the existence of a critical local public health crisis. This bill would also protect them from prosecution for distributing materials to sanitize drug paraphernalia distributed to participants in clean needle and syringe exchange projects. The county in which the program exists would have to annually declare a health state of emergency.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the floor of the Assembly.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1785 (John Vasconcellos, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To remove the requirement that people have a prescription to buy a hypodermic needle and syringe. Also would eliminate the requirement that a pharmacist keep records of who buys them. The bill would allow a person to posses up to 30 hypodermic needles and syringes if purchased through an authorized source.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Safety Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Issues

AB 1080 (Christine Kehoe (D–San Diego)
Purpose: To prohibit a state agency from entering into a contract for the acquisition of goods or services with a vendor or contractor who does not offer benefits to registered domestic partner employees equal to benefits offered to married employees.
Status: Approved by Senate Judiciary Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on August 5..
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1649 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To amend California's Fair Employment and Housing Act to ban employment and housing discrimination against transgendered people.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill may be taken up again this year. If so, it will start where it left off last year. Its first committee would be the Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill was dropped last year by the author at the request of the governor. He promised Goldberg that he'd fulfill most of the bill's purpose through new procedures at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. The department has created new procedures. They are awaiting final approval from the governor.
LLP Position: Support. We are cosponsors of the bill.

AB 1908 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To allow employer-paid, long-term care insurance to state employees and retirees enrolled in the public employee retirement system and to employees and retirees of the legislature, the court systems, school districts, and some local governments in California. Would also allow this employer-paid insurance for their siblings, spouses, parents, and spouses' parents.
Status: Is in the Senate inactive file while the bill's author negotiates with the State Department of Finance. The Department thinks the bill is too expensive.

Continued on page 8

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 7

LLP Position: Support if domestic partners and the parents of domestic partners are added to the bill. The author, thus far, refuses to add domestic partners.

AB 1942 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To establish a pilot anti-bias training program in any county whose population exceeds 1 million, and in which hate crimes exceed the statewide average of hate crimes. The project would focus on minors in custody or on probation, probation officers, correction officers, teachers, youth service providers, social workers, parents, and community members. The goal of the program would be to reduce hate crimes.
Status: Approved by the Senate Public Safety Committee and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on August 5.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2131 (Bill Leonard, R–Rancho Cucamonga)
Purpose: To provide that if a state or local firefighting, law enforcement, or patrol member gets one of several blood-borne infectious diseases on the job, and a dependent of that person gets the disease from the person, the dependent shall be eligible to receive an award of compensation under the workers' compensation laws to the same extent as the injured person is eligible to receive an award of compensation. The award could include monthly healthcare for the duration of the disease for the medical costs associated with the disease.
Status: Approved by the Assembly referred to the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee. Dropped by the author, possibly because he feared the bill would be amended to add protections for domestic.
LLP Position: Support if former domestic partners added to the bill.

AB 2216 (Fred Keeley, D–Santa Cruz)
Purpose: Under the existing law of intestate succession, the surviving spouse is entitled to a specified share of the decedent's separate property that is not effectively disposed of by will. This bill would extend this entitlement to a decedent's domestic partner.
Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on August 5.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2484 (Hannah-Beth Jackson, D–Santa Barbara)
Purpose: To prevent and reduce school violence by requiring school districts to provide instruction and materials on the prevention of school terrorism through recognition and reporting prior to the occurrence of the violence.
Status: Passed by the Senate and sent to the governor for signature.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2651 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)
Purpose: To establish goals to protect, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender foster children, foster parents, and caregivers. Asserts it is the state's goal that foster parents, including—but not limited to—gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender adults, shall be identified who are interested in caring for gay, lesbian, or transgendered youth in foster care.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Hearing postponed by the committee.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2777 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To allow Santa Barbara, Marin, and Los Angeles counties to offer death benefits, optional retirement allowances, or survivor's allowances to the domestic partners of county employees and retirees.
Status: Approved by the Senate Public Employment and

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Retirement Committee and sent to the floor of the Senate for a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2862 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To make technical, clarifying changes to current laws as they relate to domestic partners and to wrongful death, group health, or disability insurance programs, and intestate succession.
Status: Awaiting a final vote on the floor of the Senate. If approved it will have to go back to the Assembly for concurrence with changes made to the bill in the Senate.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1661 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To provide workers compensation payments to workers who take family leave to care for seriously ill family members, including domestic partners.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Insurance Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1945 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To give victims of hate crimes more time to submit hate crimes complaints to the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.
Status: Passed by the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

People of Color Issues

AB 5 (Thomas Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To prohibit an insurer from refusing to issue or renew insurance on a private passenger car, or other property, solely on the basis of a consumer credit report.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and sent to the Senate Insurance Committee. The author plans to drop the bill.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 14 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To state the intent of the Legislature to examine the state school facilities program to ensure that allocation formulas reflect the current and future needs for public kindergarten to 12th grade and to examine and assess the needs of the higher educational system, including funding distributions.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and Senate. The content of this bill was put into AB 16. That bill was signed by the governor and this bill was dropped.
LLP Position: Neutral.

AB 32 (Keith Richman, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To create the Cal-Health program, which would provide coordination of the Healthy Families and Medi-Cal programs. The bill would authorize providers to screen and temporarily enroll individuals in Medi-Cal and the Healthy Families Program at the time the person is provided with medical care, and would require full reimbursement of the provider for services covered under those programs. The bill would require licensed hospitals, clinics, and other health facilities to inform individuals about Cal-Health and, in the case of urgent or emergency services, the bill would require that individuals be informed about the program and given an opportunity to apply after services have been rendered. The bill would expand eligibility under the Medi-Cal program to adults with family incomes at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level, and would require the state to apply to the federal government for waivers to allow federal funds to be used in that regard.
Status: Is being dropped by the author.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1749 (John Longville, D–San Bernardino)
Purpose: To require the governor to proclaim the third Saturday in June each year as "Juneteenth National Freedom Day: A Day of Observance" and to urge the people of California to join in celebrating this day to honor and reflect on the significant role that African Americans have played in the history of the United States and how they have enriched society through their steadfast commitment to promoting brotherhood and equality.
Status: Approved by the Legislature and sent to the governor for signature.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1806 (Keith Richman, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To eliminate the asset test for eligibility for Medi-Cal.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. The author expects it to die in that committee.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1807 (Keith Richman, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To require the department to develop a form for the temporary qualification and accelerated enroll-

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Legislative Update

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ment of a child in the Healthy Families Program and the Medi-Cal program. The bill would require that a health-care provider, as defined, be reimbursed for services, and a pharmacy be reimbursed for prescribed drugs, provided to a temporarily qualified child under these provisions to the same extent and in the same manner as a healthcare provider or pharmacy providing services to a child who is fully enrolled and eligible for benefits under the Healthy Families Program or the Medi-Cal program.
Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on August 5.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1891 (Manny Diaz, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require the Department of Housing and Community Development to establish a program to make matching grants from money appropriated by the Legislature to local agencies that have housing trust funds, to provide financing for affordable housing to be occupied primarily by very-low-income persons and families. The bill would become operative only if the Housing Bond Act of 2002, as proposed by Senate Bill 1227, is enacted by the voters.
Status: Approved by the Senate Housing and Community Development Committee. Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on August 5.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2165 (Virginia Strom Martin, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To require the Joint Legislative Sunset Review Committee to review the state's shortage of pharmacists and make recommendations on a course of action to alleviate the shortage .
Status: Approved by the Assembly and sent to the Senate Business and Professions Committee for a vote on August 5..
LLP Position: Support.

SB 492 (Richard Polanco, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: Existing law relating to health facilities regulates the licensure of clinics, as defined, by the State Department of Health Services. Under existing law, specified types of clinics are exempted from these licensing provisions, including (until January 1, 2003) clinics that are nonprofit corporations, as described, and satisfy prescribed requirements regarding medical research and the receipt of charitable contributions and bequests. This bill would extend the exemption from

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licensure requirements for the nonprofit clinics described above to January 1, 2008.
Status: Re-referred to the Assembly Health Committee because its purpose has changed radically since it was last approved by that committee.
LLP Position: Switched to neutral because of the bill's change of purpose..

SB 1264 (Dede Alpert, D–San Diego)
Purpose: Existing law provides for the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, under which each county provides cash assistance and other benefits to qualified low-income families. Certain types of payments received by recipients of aid under the CalWORKs program are prohibited from being treated as income or resources of the family and from being deducted from the amount of aid to which the family would otherwise be entitled.
This bill says that any award or scholarship provided by a public or private entity to, or on behalf of, a dependent child based on the child's academic or extracurricular achievement or participation in a scholastic, educational, or extracurricular competition may not be treated as income or resources of the family for purposes of determining eligibility under the CalWORKs program.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Human Services Committee and sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a vote on August 7.
LLP Position: Support.

Women's Issues

AB 130 (Tony Cardenas, D–Mission Hills)
Purpose: To expand and reorganize a state-funded family-planning program to make it a comprehensive preventive and health screening program for low-income women under 65. Would provide funding for family-planning services, but specifically excludes funding for abortion-related services or advice. Current law already prohibits spending for abortions and this law leaves that provision unchanged.
Status: Approved by the Assembly and sent to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Author has dropped the bill.
LLP Position: Support with reservations about the abortion issue.

AB 1860 (Carole Migden, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To provide a female victim of sexual assault with the option of postcoital contraception. Emergency contraception shall be dispensed upon the request of the victim.
Status: Approved by all necessary Senate committees and sent to the Senate floor for the final vote in that house. If passed by the Senate it will probably have to go back to the Assembly for its agreement to changes made to the bill in the Senate.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1909 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To allow—subject to adequate, discretionary funding from a city or county—that the superior courts in San Diego County, in Santa Clara County, and in any other county willing to participate, develop a demonstration project to identify the best practices to follow in civil and criminal cases involving domestic violence. The bill would require superior courts participating in this demonstration project to report their findings and recommendations to the Judicial Council and the Legislature.
Status: Approved by the Senate and sent to the governor for signature.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1915 (Alan Lowenthal, D–Long Beach)
Purpose: To require the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide a new set of license plates to a registered owner of a vehicle who appears in person and submits a completed application and also presents to the DMV the previously issued plates, proof of identity and vehicle ownership, and either evidence of victimization by a domestic abuser or evidence of efforts to get assistance in regard to the domestic abuse, as specified.
Status: Signed by the governor.

AB 1928 (Hannah-Beth Jackson, D–Santa Barbara)
Purpose: To permit a person injured by a crime of violence motivated by gender to bring a civil action for damages against the responsible person or persons.
Status: Passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee and sent to the floor of the Senate for a final vote in that house.
LLP Position: Support.

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Legislative Update

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AB 2030 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To allow courts upon request to waive the fee for serving a protective order, restraining order, or injunction if that order or injunction is based upon specified acts or threats.
Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on August 5.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 564 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: To require applicants for licensure as a psychologist; marriage, family, and child counselor; or social worker who began graduate study on or after January 1, 2004 to complete a minimum of 15 contact hours of coursework in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention strategies. Those who were licensed earlier than that date would be required to take continuing education courses in the above subjects.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1301 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: Current law states that prior to the performance of an abortion, a medical committee must determine that continuation of the pregnancy would impair the physical or mental health of the mother, or that the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest. This law instead states that every person has the right to (a) choose or refuse birth control and (b) to choose to bear a child or obtain an abortion. The bill says the state shall not deny a woman's right to obtain an abortion unless the procedure is to be performed or assisted by one not properly licensed by the state or unless the attending physician thinks the baby could live outside the uterus *and* the doctor believes the abortion is not needed to protect the life and health of the mother.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1320 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To revise and strengthen the definition of the crime of stalking.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Safety Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations for a hearing on August 7.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1365 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: Current law allows taxpayers, until January 2003, to include an extra payment with their state income tax return and to designate that extra money to be used to support breast cancer research. This bill would extend the program until January 2008.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Revenue and Tax Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a vote on August 7.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1399 (Gloria Romero, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To send people to jail for up to one year or fine them up to $2,000, or both, if they flee the state to avoid paying court-ordered spousal support.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a vote on August 7.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1618 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To raise the marriage license application fee from $23 to $33. The $10 increase would fund domestic violence shelters, $4 of which would target the creation of domestic violence shelters in underserved areas and populations.
Status: Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for a hearing on August14.
LLP Position: Support.

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The Cruel Legislator

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declared their support for the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry. They also opposed governmental attempts to ban same-sex marriage. The same group voted overwhelmingly in March 2000 to support gay marriage in their own temples. In 1999 two lesbians married in a very public ceremony in Sacramento. Over 80 ministers participated in the ceremony. Most were Methodists but some were from other mainstream Protestant denominations.

As Vermont was considering the legalization of gay marriage, nearly 100 Protestant, Jewish, and Unitarian clergy members signed a resolution of support for the gay and lesbian couples seeking the right to marry.

More than 500 rabbis in the Central Conference say they are already performing same-sex marriages. Clergy from the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church, and the Unitarians are performing same-sex marriages. As I have said, Methodist ministers are doing the same. These religious leaders are, arguably, the guardians of the public morals. So, clearly, the view that gay sex is immoral is far from universal.

Let's consider the moral values of Leonard. His comments about honoring the Boy Scouts ignore the fact that the Scouts continue to violate the spirit of AB 1001. This bill, passed by the state legislature in 1999, prohibits sexual orientation–based employment and housing discrimination. The Scouts continue to fire scout leaders who are discovered to be gay, even though the *Los Angeles Times* reported in June 2000 that only 36 percent of those surveyed thought gay scoutmasters should be fired. Is Assemblymember Leonard failing to heed the objections of people to the firing of these scoutmasters?

This year he introduced a very good bill, AB 2131. Sometimes firefighters and police officers contract serious blood-borne diseases on the job. The diseases may include HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and other diseases. Sadly the disease is sometimes passed on to one or more members of their families. Under AB 2131, a family member who gets a serious disease in this way would get guaranteed healthcare coverage for the disease, and for as long as it lasts.

This is obviously a good bill. In these circumstances the employer has a moral obligation to care for employees' family members. However, Leonard opposed all attempts to reword the bill to assure that *domestic partners* of police and fire fighters would be protected by the bill. In fact, when it appeared that the bill would be amended to protect domestic partners, Leonard dropped the bill.

AB 2131 was introduced at the request of the California Correctional Peace Officers Association. They requested that the bill provide care for the daughter of a prison guard who had gotten hepatitis from her father. This little girl will probably have the disease for the rest of her life. But medical care under her father's insurance will end when she reaches age 21. Now that Leonard has killed his own bill, that innocent girl may not have the medical care she needs when she grows up.

Refusing to help gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Californians is so important to Leonard that he is willing to deny important medical care to an innocent little girl. Frankly, I don't think much of the moral values of Assemblymember Leonard. His actions are cruel, both to the little girl and to domestic partners who might have benefited from AB 2131.

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Assemblymember Chu

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The conservatives absolutely hate this bill and they have mounted a strong effort to defeat it. It is controversial just because of its general subject: LGBT adults and children. Unfortunately, many people still think gay adults are prone to child molesting. That mistaken belief stokes the fires of opposition to the bill, which would encourage the inclusion of GLBT adults as foster parents and caregivers.

Nevertheless, AB 2651 has been approved by the State Assembly and by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Lambda Letters Project members have been providing vigorous support for the bill through our letter-writing campaigns. In fact, we have delivered over 6,000 letters and e-mail messages of support for the bill to state legislators. We will continue to do all in our power to assure the passage of this bill. But, win or lose, Assemblymember Chu is to be commended for taking on a tough bill on behalf of the LGBT community.

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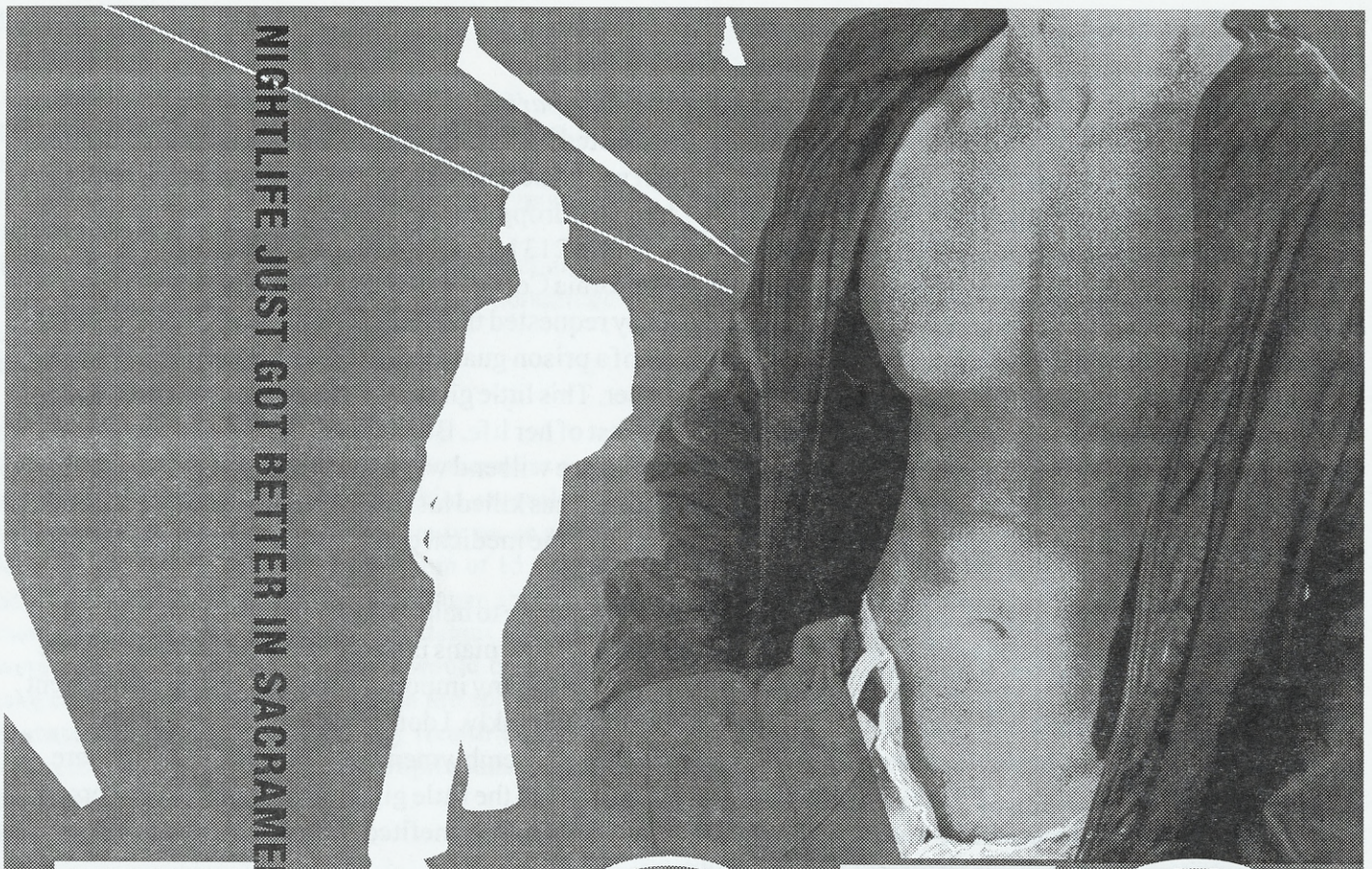

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